

In spite of its compact texture porphyry disintegrates, like other rocks, when exposed to air and water. One of the sphinxes transported from Egypt to Paris, being accidentally placed under a gutter of the Louvre, soon began to exhibit signs of exfoliation, notwithstanding it had remained sound for ages under the climate of Egypt. In this country, and even in France, where the climate is much drier, the porphyries frequently decompose so as to become scarcely recognisable. They crop out in various parts of France, but are only abundant in the north-eastern part of the central plateau, and in some parts of the south. They form mountains of a conical form, presenting, nearly always, considerable depressions on their flanks. In the Vosges they attain a height of from three to four thousand feet.

The *Serpentine* rocks are a sort of compact *talc*, which owe their soapy texture and greasy feel to silicate of magnesia. Their softness permits of their being turned in a lathe and fashioned into vessels of various forms. Even stoves are constructed of this substance, which bears heat well. The serpentine quarried on the banks of Lake Como, which bears the name of *pierre ollaire*, or pot-stone, is excellently adapted for this purpose. Serpentine shows itself in the Vosges, in the Limousin, in the Lyonnais, and in the Var; it occupies an immense tract in the Alps, as well as in the Apennines. Mona marble is an example of serpentine; and the Lizard Point, Cornwall, is a mass of it. A portion of the stratified rocks of Tuscany, and also those of the Island of Elba, have been upheaved and overturned by eruptions of it.

As for the British Islands, plutonic rocks are extensively developed in Scotland, where the Cambrian and Silurian rocks, often of gneissic character—associated here and there with great bosses of granite and syenite—form by far the greater part of the region known as the Highlands. In the Isle of Arran a circular mass of coarse-grained granite protrudes through the schists of the northern part of the island; while, in the southern part, a finer-grained granite and veins of porphyry and coarse-grained granite have broken through the stratified rocks.\* In Devonshire and Cornwall there are four great bosses of granite; in the southern parts of Cornwall the mineral axis is defined by a line drawn through the centre of the several bosses from south-west to north-east; but in the north of Cornwall, and extending into Devonshire, it strikes nearly east and west. The great granite

\* "Geology of the Island of Arran," by Andrew C. Ramsay. "Geology of Arran and Clydesdale," by James Bryce.